



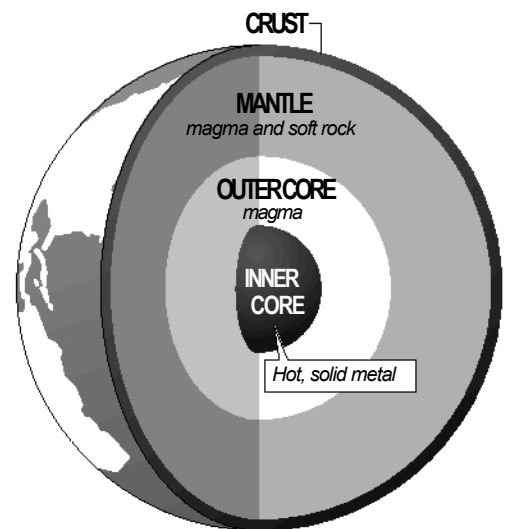
Geothermal

Geothermal comes from the Greek words *geo* (earth) and *therme* (heat). Geothermal energy is heat inside the earth. The inside of the earth is very hot. Sometimes this heat comes near the surface. We can use this heat to warm our houses. We can make electricity with it.

The Earth is Not Solid

The earth is made in layers, like an egg. At the center is a **core** of iron. Around that is an outer core of iron and rock so hot the rock is melted. This liquid rock is called **magma**. The next layer is a mixture of rock and magma called the **mantle**. The shell of the earth—with the oceans and mountains—is called the **crust**.

In some places, magma comes close to the earth's surface. It heats the water underground. We can use this heated water. We dig wells and pump the hot water and steam out of the ground.



Geothermal is Renewable

The hot water we use will be replaced by rain. The heat inside the earth will always be there. More heat is made every day in the earth's core.

We won't run out of geothermal energy. It is a **renewable** energy source.

Where is Geothermal Energy?

Geothermal energy is everywhere under the ground, but sometimes it is hard to reach. In most places, the crust is miles thick. Magma is near the surface in only a few places.

Earthquakes and volcanoes are signs that magma is near the surface. When magma reaches the surface it is called **lava**. Most of the geothermal energy in the United States is found on the West Coast and in Hawaii.

We Use Geothermal Energy

People have used geothermal energy for thousands of years. In some places, there are pools of water that are always hot. They are warmed by underground springs. These **hot springs** have often been used for bathing. Many people believe these springs have healing powers.

Most people in Iceland use hot water from geothermal wells to heat their homes. Some scientists think that someday we will be able to capture the energy in volcanoes.

Electricity

Power plants use steam from geothermal wells to make electricity. The steam is used to spin turbines. The turbines spin magnets in coils of copper wire to make electricity.

The power plants are built close to the wells. The steam is pumped straight from the wells to the power plants.

Geothermal is Clean Energy

Geothermal energy is clean energy. No fuel is burned, so there is no air pollution. The steam is turned into water and put back into the earth. And geothermal energy is cheap—new power plants can make electricity for about the same cost as coal plants.

